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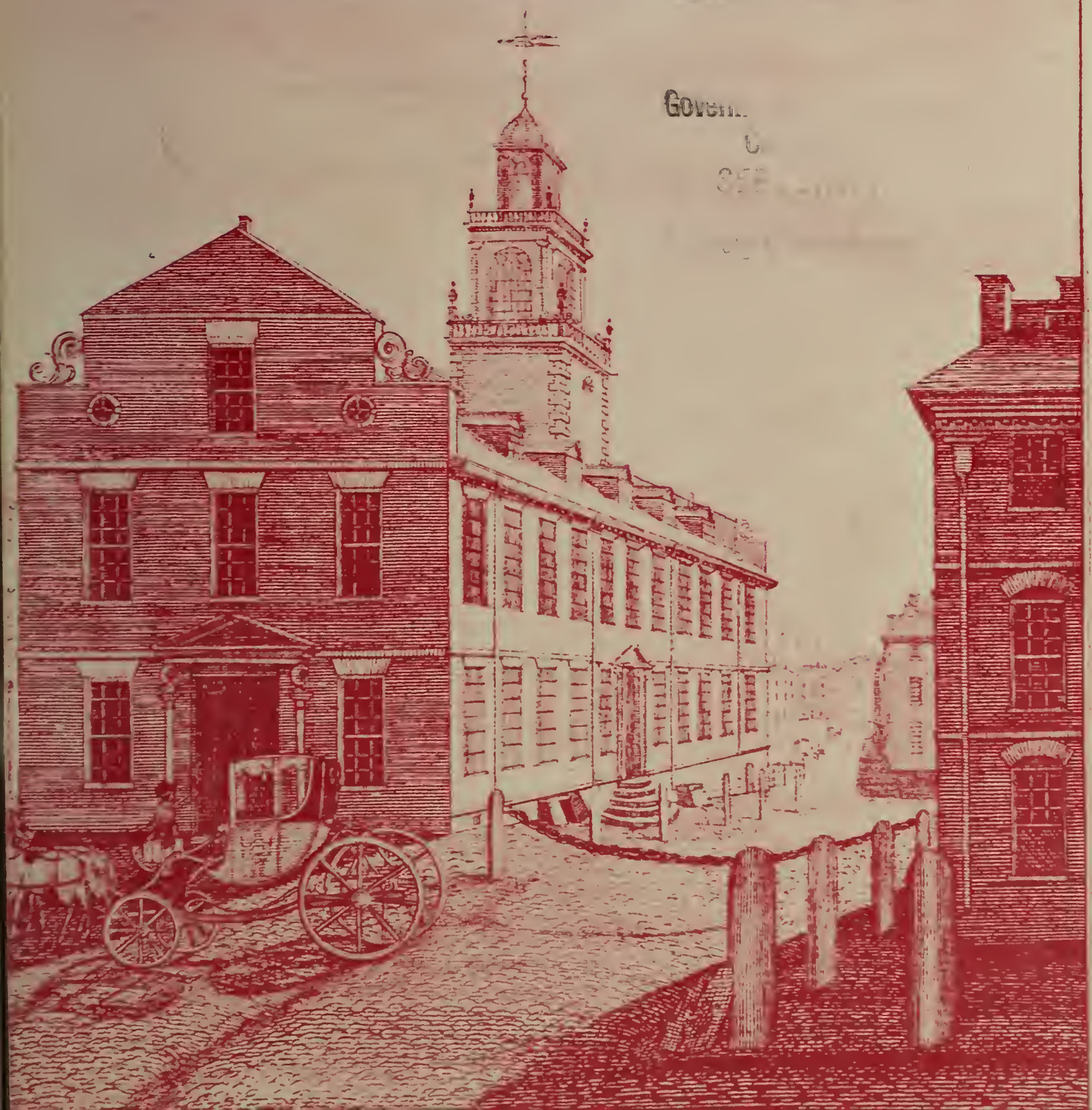
MASSACHUSETTS IN FERMENT

The Coming of the American Revolution

A Chronological Survey, 1760-1775

A REVOLUTIONARY WAR BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION PUBLICATION



Govern...

MASSACHUSETTS IN FERMENT

The Coming of the American Revolution

A Chronological Survey, 1760-1775

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Revolutionary War Bicentennial Commission
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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THE *Boſton-* AND COUNTRY

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Containing the freſheſt Advices, Foreign and Domeſtic.

MONDAY, March 11, 1771.

From the ESSEX GAZETTE. SALEM, MARCH 5, 1771.

As a ſolemn and perpetual MEMORIAL

Of the Tyranny of the Britiſh Adminiſtration of Government in the Years 1768, 1769, & 1770:

Of the fatal and deſtructive Conſequences of quartering Armies, in Time of Peace, in populous Cities:

Of the ridiculous Policy, and infamous Abſurdity, of ſupporting *Civil Government* by a *Military Force:*

Of the great Duty and Neceſſity of firmly oppoſing Deſpotiſm in its firſt Approaches:

Of the deteſtable Principles and arbitrary Conduct of thoſe *Miniſters* in Britain who adviſed, and of their *Tools* in America who deſired, the Introduction of a Standing Army into this Province in the Year 1768:

Of the irrefragable Proof which thoſe Miniſters themſelves thereby produced, that the Civil Government, as by them adminiſtered, was weak, wicked, and tyrannical:

Of the vile Ingratitude and abominable Wickedneſs of every *American*, who abetted and encouraged, either in Thought, Word or Deed, the Eſtabliſhment of a Standing Army among his Countrymen:

Of the unaccountable Conduct of thoſe *Civil Governors*, the immediate Repreſentatives of his Majeſty, who, while the *Military* were triumphantly inſulting the whole LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE, and while the Blood of the maſſacred Inhabitants was flowing in the Streets, perſiſted in repeatedly diſclaiming all Authority of relieving the People, by any the leaſt Removal of the Troops:

And of the ſavage Cruelty of the IMMEDIATE PERPETRATORS;

BE it forever Remembered,

That this Day, THE FIFTH OF MARCH, is the Anniverſary of

Preſton's Maſſacre--in King-Street--Boſton, N. England--

1770.

In which Five of his Majeſty's Subjects were ſlain, and Six wounded,

By the Diſcharge of a Number of Muſkets from a Party of Soldiers under the Command of Capt. *Thomas Preſton.*

GOD ſave the PEOPLE!

Preface

The road by which the Province of Massachusetts traveled from loyalty to Great Britain to outright revolution was long and tortuous. When the decade of the 1760's opened, the relationship between Great Britain and Massachusetts was at its highest point. Governor Thomas Pownall left the province in the late spring of 1760, a highly respected and well-liked man, and Francis Bernard arrived from New Jersey to assume the governorship of Massachusetts at a most propitious time. The French and Indian War was coming to an end. The city of Quebec had been captured the year before, the fall of Montreal was imminent, and both Great Britain and Massachusetts shared the happiness at these victories.

At the end of the decade much of the good will had been dissipated. The political leadership in England had fallen into the hands of men who were intent upon tightening their regulation of the colonies, and the resistance to these moves created a new radical leadership in Massachusetts which in the 1770's moved that province almost inexorably into a war with the Mother Country.

The author of this work has attempted to list chronologically the events that led to the final separation. He has begun with the departure of Thomas Pownall, the last royal governor to enjoy the favor of the people of Massachusetts, and has ended his chronology with the convening of the Provincial Congress in July of 1775 which made the break with England complete. In compiling this list of these events, the author has had to be selective. He hopes that, although this work is not exhaustive, he has not omitted any major events in the period.

He is grateful to Senator Joseph C. DiCarlo, Chairman of the Massachusetts Revolutionary War Bicentennial Committee, who approved the concept and encouraged the completion of the project; to Miss Mary V. Darcy, Executive Secretary of the Commission, who made arrangements for its publication, to Professor Robert E. Moody, a member of the Commission who first directed him into colonial history, to Professor Edmund S. Morgan, who developed his interest in the Revolutionary period; to Mrs. Ralph Green and Mrs. Jordan D. Fiore, who typed and retyped the original drafts; and to Professors Benjamin A. Spence and Jean F. Stonehouse, who read the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions for revising and improving the contents of this pamphlet.

Jordan D. Fiore
December, 1970

1760

June 3 — Thomas Pownall, popular Royal Governor of Massachusetts, having been named Governor of South Carolina, leaves Boston. At his embarkation, a local newspaper reports that "both Houses attended him in a body to his barge, and took leave of him in terms as complimentary to his talents as they were creditable to themselves."

August 4 — Francis Bernard, former Royal Governor of New Jersey, arrives in Boston, to assume the post of Royal Governor of Massachusetts.

Summer — Charles Paxton, Royal Customs Officer in Boston, directs James Cockle, deputy at Salem, to petition the Superior Court for *writs of assistance,* general search warrants. Judge Stephen Sewall expresses some doubt as to the legality and constitutionality of these writs and of the power of the Court to grant them. He orders the case scheduled for hearing at the February, 1761, session of the Superior Court.

September 11 — Stephen Sewall, Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, dies in Boston. Thomas Hutchinson, already a Councillor, Probate Judge, and Lieutenant Governor, is chosen for the post by Governor Bernard on November 13.

October 25 — King George II dies and is succeeded by his grandson, George III.

December — In an address Governor Bernard speaks to the General Court of the "blessing to their *subjection* to Great Britain." The Council in its reply referred to their *relation* to Great Britain. The House about a week later extolled "the happiness of the times" but spoke to their *connection with* Great Britain.

1761

February — Custom House officers in Boston had asked the Superior Court some months earlier to issue general search warrants, *writs of assistance.* In this month, James Otis and Oxenbridge Thacher present a counter-petition on behalf of some merchants of Boston. Jeremy Gridley, one of Boston's leading lawyers, defends the issuance of the writs, while Otis and Thacher make a strong case against them. Chief Justice Hutchinson and the court make no decision but agree to ask advice from authorities in England, who eventually advise the Chief Justice that such writs are legal. So strong were the arguments of Otis and Thacher and so intense were the sentiments of the colonists that the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 declared writs of assistance illegal as did the Federal Constitution.

Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr., publishes a pamphlet entitled *Considerations on the Election of Counsellors Humbly Offered to the Electors,* a strong statement on the principle of the separation of powers.

May — Boston voters elect James Otis, Jr., as a representative to the General Court.

November 14 — John Adams of Braintree is admitted to practice in the Superior Court of Judicature.

1762

February — The General Court passes a bill, over the objections of Thomas Hutchinson, ordering the issuance of new treasury notes and making gold and silver legal tender at the usual rates. After some hesitation, Governor Bernard approves.

Earlier in the winter Otis and Hutchinson had exchanged sharp letters on the subject in the Boston press. Shortly afterward Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr., publishes a pamphlet entitled *Considerations on Lowering the Value of Gold Coins, Within the Province of the Massachusetts Bay.*

February 27 — The House of Representatives votes, with James Otis's support, to grant Governor Bernard the island of Mount Desert off the Maine Coast "in consideration of (his) extraordinary services."

The General Court votes to raise troops and to provide bounties and equipment for additional soldiers to fight against the French.

March 6 — The General Court passes a bill to check the issuance of writs of assistance, but Governor Bernard, on advice of the judges of the Superior Court, vetoes it.

September 16 — Governor Bernard notifies the House of Representatives that, because of the capture of St. John's, Newfoundland, by the French, he has increased the armament of the Massachusetts sloop, added 50 men, and has sent it out to protect Massachusetts fishing vessels.

The House of Representatives, under Otis's leadership, criticizes the Governor for spending money for this purpose without consulting the House stating, "It is in effect taking from the House their most darling privilege, the right of originating all taxes." After the session prorogues, James Otis publishes a defense of the House entitled *A Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay.*

1763

February 10 — Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian War.

March — Proposals made in the House of Commons by a Committee headed by Charles Townshend newly-appointed First Lord of Trade, result in an abortive attempt in that body to reduce duties on molasses.

Some members of the British ministry begin laying plans for raising revenue by modifying and then enforcing laws requiring that a duty be paid on foreign molasses imported into the colonies. A bill is presented in the House of Commons, but action is postponed until the next session. In addition, there is some talk of a stamp tax, but action on this is also postponed until the next session.

George Grenville, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, sponsors a bill providing that all officers of British ships of war stationed on the North American coast should act as officers of customs and should receive a share of the cargoes confiscated for violation of the revenue laws. New England merchants are greatly concerned. The bill is passed in April and signed by King George on April 18.

In the fall of 1763 some leading men of Boston organize the Anti-Stamp Fire Society, in part probably as a social organization but with well-defined political overtones.

In the fall news is received in Boston of the issuance of a Royal Proclamation on October 7 which prohibits any settlements beyond the headwaters of rivers that flow into the Atlantic, creates three royal provinces of the territory ceded to Great Britain after the war: Quebec, East Florida, and West Florida. All Indian matters were placed under control of the Crown.

1764

March 7 — The House of Commons debates whether it has a right to tax Americans, "they not being represented," and decides the question unanimously in the affirmative.

March 9 — The House of Commons begins debate on the American Revenue Act (Sugar Act), first law to be passed specifically to raise money in the colonies for the Crown.

March 10 — George Grenville, Chancellor of the Exchequer, induces the House of Commons to vote a resolution stating that "it was proper to charge certain stamp duties in the colonies and plantations." Action is postponed for a year.

April 5 — Parliament passes the Sugar Act, replacing the Molasses Act of 1733, the revenues to be used "toward defraying necessary expenses of defending, protecting and securing said colonies."

April 19 — Parliament passes the Currency Act, forbidding colonial legislatures to issue paper money as legal tender.

May 15 — Boston voters elect Royall Tyler, James Otis, Jr., Thomas Cushing, and Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr., to represent them in the General Court.

May 24 — A committee appointed by the Boston town meeting passes instructions to the representatives denouncing taxation without representation and proposing that Massachusetts leaders ask prominent men in other colonies to join them in protest.

June 13 — The General Court instructs its London agent, Jasper Mauduit, to oppose all revenue-producing and quartering bills, stating "that no agent of the colony had power to make concessions in any case, without express orders; and that the silence of the Province should have been imputed to any cause, even to despair, rather than to have been construed into a tacit cession of their rights. . . ."

Protests against the acts are sent to England where they are ill-received.

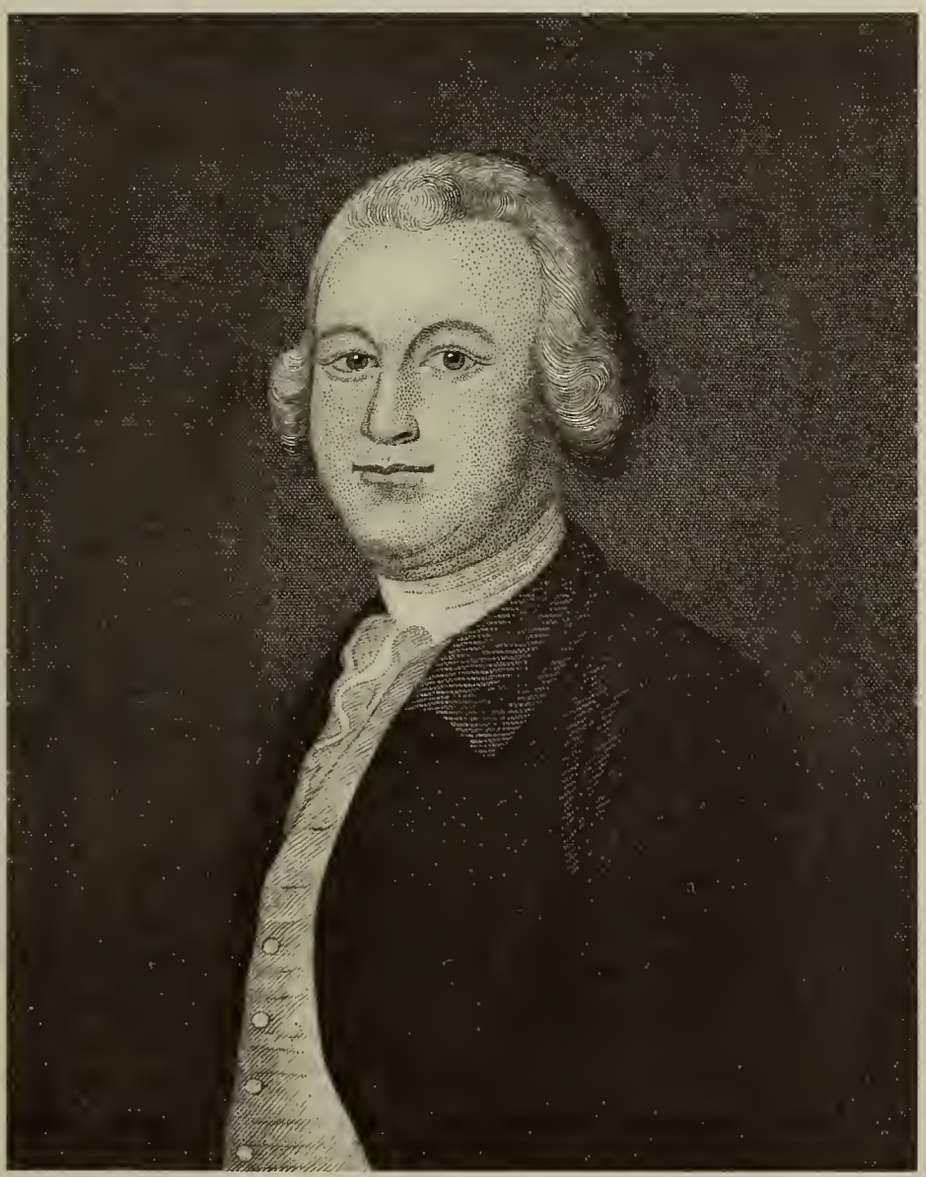
July 23 — James Otis publishes *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* in Boston. In this pamphlet Otis tries to place the colonies in their proper position in the British Commonwealth and opposes strongly the external taxes of Parliament.

September — Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr., publishes *Sentiments of a British American,* in which he supports Otis's ideas, takes a strong stand against the Sugar Act, points out that Britain is destroying her trade in America, and asks, "Doth not this resemble the conduct of the good wife in the fable, who killed her hen that every day laid her a golden egg?"

1765

January 9 — The General Court assembles in Boston amid rumors that a Stamp Act is under consideration in Parliament.

February 22 — The House of Commons passes the Stamp Act, a direct tax on the colonies requiring the use of tax stamps on newspapers, licenses, deeds, and other legal documents. The House of Lords approves the measure ten days later.



James Otis

March 22	King George III gives royal assent to the Stamp Act to become effective on November 1, 1765.
April 4	*The Massachusetts Gazette* in Boston publishes a notice of passage of Stamp Act, stating erroneously that "not a man spoke who did not declare that the American people ought to be taxed."
May 6	A London newspaper prints a statement that "at present all America seems to be in a violent agitation; they sing, up and down the streets of Boston, the downfall of Old England, and the rise of New."
May 15	Parliament passes a Quartering Act, ordering colonists to provide British troops with barracks and supplies.
June	Governor Bernard addresses the General Court and carefully avoids any allusion to the Stamp Act.
June 6	James Otis presents a resolution to the Massachusetts House of Representatives directing the Speaker to name a committee to correspond with the other provincial assemblies asking that they send committees of delegates to a "meeting . . . to consult together on their present circumstances and the difficulties to which they were and must be reduced by the operation of the late acts of Parliament." (The meeting is scheduled for the first Tuesday in October in New York.) The speaker names Samuel White, James Otis, and Joseph Lee to the committee of correspondence.
June 20	James Otis, Timothy Ruggles, and Oliver Partridge are elected delegates to the Stamp Act Congress.
July 8	*The Boston Gazette and News-Letter* reprints the Virginia Resolves opposing the Stamp Act (passed May 30) and adds a comment that "Their spirited Resolves do indeed serve a perfect contrast for a certain, tame, pusillanimous, daub'd insipid thing, delicately touch'd up and call'd an Address; which was lately sent from this side the Water, to please the Tastes of the Tools of Corruption on the other."
	Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr., representative to the General Court, dies in Boston.
August 14	A mob gathers in Boston. Effigies of a stamp officer and the devil are hung on an elm tree in Hanover Square (present-day Essex and Washington Streets) in Boston. The mob then proceeds to demolish buildings constructed for use as Stamp Office and damage the home, furniture, fences, barn, and grounds of Andrew Oliver, who had been designated Stamp Officer for Massachusetts.
August 15	Governor Bernard issues proclamations offering 100 pounds for information leading to the conviction of "any of the persons concerned in the outrage" of the night before.
	Andrew Oliver resigns as Stamp Agent.
August 26	A mob in Boston attacks the home of Benjamin Hallowell, Jr., the Comptroller of Customs, almost destroying it in its entirety. The mob then moves to attack the home of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson, demolishing its contents, including many important original documents in Massachusetts history, and leaving only the walls standing. Most Boston merchants join the leading merchants of New York and Philadelphia in refusing to import articles from England until Stamp Act is repealed. Many cancel all orders as of January 1, 1766.

September 10 — The Stamp Agent for New Hampshire, George Messervey, arrives in Boston and is forced to resign his commission. Boston receives news that repeal of the Stamp Act is under consideration by Parliament.

September 11 — The famous tree on which effigies were hung on August 14 is designated as the *Tree of Liberty.*

September 18 — The town meeting in Boston votes to have portraits painted of General Henry Seymour Conway and Colonel Isaac Barre, who had opposed the Stamp Act.

Samuel Adams induces the town meeting to pass a resolution expressing abhorrence of the Stamp Act as contrary to the charter of the province and to their rights as British subjects.

September 20 — Stamps arrive in Boston and are stored under guard at Castle William.

September 25 — The General Court assembles; Governor Bernard discusses the Stamp Act and asks that an indemnity be paid to those who lost property in the August riots. Bernard points out that he is required to support the Stamp Act, that the General Court should not deny the right of Parliament to make such a law, and that non-compliance might cause all trade in Massachusetts to close "for want of legal clearance." Unable to obtain satisfactory action on either matter, Bernard prorogues the General Court two days later.

September 27 — Samuel Adams is elected Representative at a special Boston town meeting, replacing Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr.

October — At the Stamp Act Congress in New York, Timothy Ruggles is elected President over James Otis by one vote. Twenty-seven delegates from nine states are present. The Congress sends resolutions to the King (Oct. 19), Lords (Oct. 22), and the Commons (Oct. 23), stating that the Stamp Act and other acts had "Manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonies." Ruggles is one of the two delegates who refuse to sign the resolutions.

October 23 — The General Court is called into session. The House of Representatives replies to Bernard's message of September 25, protesting their loyalty to the King and Parliament. They add that they see nothing criminal in individuals declining to do business in which stamps are used, and do not presume to judge the limits of Parliament, *but they know these exist.*

October 29 — The House of Representatives passes fourteen resolves on the Stamp Act. Recognizing the impracticality of Parliamentary representation for the colonies, the House asserts that "all acts made by any power whatever, other than the General Assembly of this Province, imposing taxes on the inhabitants, are infringements of our inherent and unalienable rights as men and British subjects. . . ." The House takes no action on payment of Bills of indemnity for damage done by rioters.

November 1 — James Otis returns from New York in triumph and is given an overwhelming ovation by the House of Representatives.

The Stamp Act becomes effective. In Boston bells are tolled, flags are placed at half-mast, and effigies are hung from the Liberty Tree.

November 1-5 — There are many demonstrations in the town of Boston. More effigies are hung but there is no damage to property. Demonstrations culminate in a parade and bonfires in celebration of Guy Fawkes Day.

November 2 — The House of Representatives approves the report of proceedings of the Stamp Act Congress.

November 8 — Governor Bernard prorogues the General Court while the House of Representatives debates the possibility of keeping courts open without stamps.

December 17 — Responding to rumors in Boston that Andrew Oliver is seeking reinstatement as Stamp Agent, the "Sons of Liberty" force that gentleman to march through the streets of Boston (despite the stormy weather) and to stand under the Liberty Tree before 2,000 persons to take an oath that "he had never taken any measures to act in the office, and that he would never do so, directly or indirectly."

December 18 — The Boston town meeting names a committee to ask the Governor in Council to reopen the courts of law, without stamps. The Governor and Council say this cannot be done. Shortly afterward several inferior courts agree either to continue actions to a later date or to dispense with the use of stamps.

1766

January — The House of Representatives notes that the Customs House is open for business without stamps and asks the Governor to reopen the courts. The Council, still dominated by Hutchinson, does not concur in the request. Thomas Hutchinson resigns as Probate Judge in Suffolk County and is succeeded by his brother Foster, who allows the use of stampless papers in that court.

January 14 — Parliamentary session opens in England with the repeal of the Stamp Act as the main item on the agenda.

January 17 — Merchants in England take action to induce Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act, pointing out their great losses and the many business failures as a result of non-importation agreements in America.

February 6 — The House of Representatives passes a vote of approbation for Partridge's and Otis's actions at the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 and votes to censure Timothy Ruggles for his failure to sign the resolutions and for leaving the Stamp Act Congress before its adjournment.

Having received newspapers from Halifax bearing tax stamps, the patriot leaders in the various towns burn them publicly.

February 22 — A bill for full repeal of the Stamp Act is brought before the House of Commons by a vote of 275 to 167.

March 4 — Repeal of the Stamp Act passes the House of Commons and on March 17 passes the House of Lords. King George III gives his assent on March 18.

March 17 — *The Massachusetts Gazette* publishes an article denouncing the Stamp Act as unconstitutional. The author asks, "Shall we not then, all as one man join in opposing it, and spill the last drop of our blood, if necessary, rather than live to see it take place in America?"

Thomas Hutchinson, as Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, continues the vacation of that Court to April 29 and then to August 1766, so that he would not have to make any decision regarding the use of stamps.

April — Radicals campaign in Boston to control town elections in May. The Caucus Club, a radical cabal that dominated Boston politics, continues its activities in that town.

May — At the Boston town meeting the voters elect James Otis, Samuel Adams, Thomas Cushing, and John Hancock, all "Sons of Liberty," as their Representatives to the General Court.

May 16 — The brigantine *Harrison* arrives in Boston carrying news of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

May 19 — Boston selectmen having set this day aside to celebrate the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Sons of Liberty arrange day-long parades, exhibitions, music, and fireworks. Even Governor Bernard, happy about the repeal of the Stamp Act, invites the Council to meet him at Province House, where they drink to the health of George III and offer "many other loyal toasts."

May 22 — *The Massachusetts Gazette* publishes the Stamp Act repeal measure in full. Also included in the *Gazette* is the full text of the Declaratory Act, in which Parliament asserts its authority to make laws binding the American colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

May 28 — The House of Representatives elects James Otis as Speaker, but Governor Bernard negatives the choice. The House then elects Thomas Cushing in his place. The House of Representatives rejects Andrew Oliver, Peter Oliver, Thomas Hutchinson, and Edmund Trowbridge as Councillors. Governor Bernard negatives the Councillors elected to replace those four, a councillor elected from Maine (Nathaniel Sparhawk), and James Otis, Sr., who was reelected. The House reacts to some biting criticism by Bernard by explaining that three judges had been dropped from the Council because their membership was "a dangerous union of legislative and executive powers in the same persons."

The Massachusetts Council elects James Bowdoin, a Boston merchant, to replace Hutchinson as President.

June 3 — Governor Bernard presents a letter from Henry Seymour Conway, Secretary of State for American Affairs, containing a resolution from the House of Commons asserting that the Massachusetts House of Representatives should indemnify those whose property was damaged in the Stamp Act riots of the previous summer. Members of the House of Representatives promise to consider the "requisition" and to consult their constituents about the matter.

June 12 — The Patriot leadership in the House of Representatives, eager to inform the public of the proceedings of that body, supports a measure ordering "That the debates of this House be open, and that a gallery be erected for the accommodation of such as shall be inclined to attend them." The galleries are immediately begun and are finished within a week.

JAMES BOWDOIN.

July 24 — At the request of the General Court, Governor Bernard designated this date as Thanksgiving Day.

August 14 — The anniversary of the outbreak against the Stamp Act is celebrated in Boston with a great parade.

October — The town of Boston instructs its representatives to agree to indemnify for the Stamp Act riots only if amnesty is voted to all participants.

November 1 — The modifications of trade laws by Parliament become effective. A uniform 1d duty per gallon on all molasses, British and foreign, entering America replaces old 3d duty on foreign molasses. Boston merchants are unhappy to learn that all American products shipped to northern Europe must clear British ports *en route.*

November 3 — *The Boston Gazette and News Letter* publishes a note insinuating that Governor Bernard had accepted minor bribes from customs officers.

The House of Representatives continues to debate the matter of indemnifying those whose property was damaged in the Stamp Act Riots. After first voting against the action, the members agree to adjourn for three weeks to consult further with the towns of the Province.

December 5 — The House of Representatives by a vote of 53 to 35 passes "An Act for Granting Compensation to the Sufferers, and General Pardon Indemnity, and Oblivion to the Offenders in the Late Times," thus indemnifying with public funds those who lost property in the Stamp Act Riots. The Council concurs the next day, and Governor Bernard gives the bill his reluctant consent.

1767

January 26 — Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the government following Pitt's illness, reveals that he is planning a new revenue measure for America "free from offence."

January 30 — The House of Representatives protests Governor Bernard's action of December when he, with advice of Council, provided barracks at the expense of the province for two companies of British troops driven into Boston harbor by "stress of weather."

January 31 — Some members of the House of Representatives object to the fact that Thomas Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor, who was defeated for reelection to the Council in 1766, continues to attend Council meetings but does not vote or speak. These representatives felt that Hutchinson should be excluded. Governor Bernard asks Secretary Oliver to study precedents in the matter.

February 5 — The Massachusetts Council endorses the resolve of the House of Representatives (January 31) excluding Hutchinson, and Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson submits to this decision.

March 16 — The Boston town meeting reconsiders the instructions given to representatives in May 1766 to advocate the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts and reaffirms its earlier position.

March 18 — The anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act is celebrated in Boston by the illumination of Faneuil Hall.

May	The House of Representatives again elects six men who had been rejected in May of 1766 to serve as Councillors. Governor Bernard negatives five of them allowing only Nathaniel Sparhawk of Maine to serve.
May 13-15	Townshend's tax proposals are debated in the House of Commons. The Massachusetts agent gets no opportunity to protest.
June 28	Parliament passes the Townshend Acts which provide for the legality of writs of assistance, new vice-admiralty courts, a Board of Customs Commissioners for America to be stationed in Boston, and import duties on tea, glass, lead, paint, and paper. Approved by the King the next day, the Acts become effective November 20.
August	News of the passage of the Townshend Acts is received in Boston, and Boston merchants begin talking of non-importation agreements.
September 4	Charles Townshend dies suddenly. Lord North is named to succeed him. North had voted for the Stamp Act and against its repeal.
October	Prospects of the limitations placed by forthcoming Townshend Act encourage some Boston merchants to intensify their smuggling activities. The Merchants Club discusses non-importation.
October 28	The Boston town meeting adopts, though with some opposition, the principles of the non-importation agreements, the encouragement of industry and economy, and the promotion of manufactures. Committees are named to encourage other colonies to do likewise.
November 5	Three of the five members of the American Board of Commissioners of the Customs (Charles Paxton, William Burch, Henry Hilton) arrive in Boston. Two other members (John Temple and John Robinson) are already in Boston.
November 20	The Townshend Acts become effective. In Boston there are some placards and effigies, but the situation is generally quiet. James Otis, surprisingly, speaks out strongly against non-importation agreements in Boston town meeting.
December 22	Leaders in the Boston town meeting, pointing out that non-importation agreements had ended with the repeal of the Stamp Act, now deplore the unfavorable "balance of payments," and pass a resolve "to encourage a spirit of industry and frugality among the people and to establish manufacturing in the provinces" and instruct their representatives to work to carry out these ideas.
December 27	Lord Hillsborough becomes the Secretary of State for the colonies.
	1768
January 21	Radical members of the House of Representatives introduce a motion in that body directing that a letter be sent to the other colonies urging them to join with Massachusetts in opposing the Townshend Acts. The motion fails to carry, so Samuel Adams begins program of "education."

February — The General Court considers the resolution of the Boston town meeting of December 20 and overwhelmingly (only Timothy Ruggles dissenting) supports the idea of encouraging manufacturing in the province. The House refuses to allow Ruggles to put his reasons for dissenting in the official record.

February 11 — Samuel Adams reintroduces a motion to prepare a Circular Letter for distribution to the legislatures of other colonies containing remonstrance against the taxation feature of the Townshend Acts, against the new customs board, and the use of the revenues for salaries of judges and governors. The measure passes overwhelmingly.

The Customs Commissioners in Boston ask for armed force to help them to carry out their duties.

March 4 — Governor Bernard denounces the Circular Letter as seditious and dissolves the General Court.

March 14 — Boston merchants adopt a strong non-importation agreement to go into effect, provided that New York and Philadelphia merchants agree.

Twelve letters later appearing as *Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* by John Dickinson had appeared in the *Philadelphia Chronicle* and are reprinted in Boston. The Boston town meeting takes up the subject of these letters, votes to thank the author, and names a committee consisting of leading patriots "to prepare and publish a letter of thanks accordingly." The Boston town meeting names a committee to procure subscriptions for the encouragement of the manufacturing of duck cloth.

March 18 — The second anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act is celebrated "by a large company, who met at the British Coffee house, and Colonel Ingersoll's on King Street."

March 28 — The Customs Commissioners send a memorial to the Ministry again asking for troops to help them in carrying out duties.

April 22 — Lord Hillsborough sends a letter to Bernard ordering him to dissolve the General Court if that body refuses to rescind the Circular Letter of February 11. On the day before, Hillsborough wrote to other governors denouncing the letter and ordering them to prevent other assemblies from approving it.

May 17 — The *Romney*, a 50-gun frigate from Halifax, arrives in Boston.

May 20 — Thomas Cushing of Boston is again elected Speaker of the House. Governor Bernard again negatives six councillors including James Otis, John Hancock, Artemas Ward and Jerathmeel Bowers.

The assemblies in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New Jersey commend the Massachusetts Circular Letter.

June 10-18 — The Customs Commissioners order the seizure of the sloop *Liberty*, owned by John Hancock, for landing wine without payment of duty and tow sloop to berth next to the *Romney*. (See entry for May 17.) A mob attacks the Customs Commissioners and forces them to flee to Castle William, where they issue an appeal for more troops. Governor Bernard also sends a letter to the Ministry supporting the need for troops.

June 17	The Boston town meeting instructs the representatives "to assert and vindicate our dear and invaluable rights and liberties, at the utmost hazard of our lives and fortunes."
June 21	Bernard orders the House of Representatives to rescind its letter of February 11 and to expunge it from the House Journal. After lengthly debate, the House refuses by vote of 92-17 on June 30 and is dissolved by Bernard on the next day.
June 28	Bernard is granted leave to return to England. He receives the news in August.
July	General Thomas Gage receives orders to send troops to Massachusetts.
August 1	Boston merchants meet and form a non-importation agreement pledging not to import any items enumerated in the Townshend Acts after January 1, 1769, until all duties are repealed. From January 1, 1769 to January 1, 1770 only the most necessary supplies would be imported.
September 12	The Boston town meeting informs Governor Bernard that they have learned that troops would soon arrive and asks that the General Court be called into session.
September 13	Governor Bernard replies that he has no public information about troops and that he could not call the General Court into session without the approval of the Ministry. On the same day the town meeting votes to instruct the Selectmen to call a convention of delegates from the towns at Faneuil Hall on September 22.
September 22	A convention of delegates from ninety-six towns meets at Faneuil Hall and sends an address to the Governor who refuses to receive it.
October 1	Two regiments of British soldiers and a train of artillery land in Boston without opposition.
October 5	Vandals damage the portrait of Bernard hanging in Harvard Hall by cutting out a piece shaped like a heart out of the breast.
October 15	General Thomas Gage, Commander in Chief of the British Army in America, arrives in Boston to take personal command of British troops in that town. There are troubles in Boston over a quartering place for British troops. Several Bostonians complain of abuse and insult by the soldiers.
October 27	Some prominent men of Boston sign a conciliatory address to General Gage reminding him that the people had been misrepresented, that the disorders had been exaggerated, and hoping that he would remove some of the troops from the town. General Gage thanks them for the message but removes no troops.
November 3	John Hancock and five other merchants are arrested for smuggling. Released on bail, they are scheduled for trial in March. (The prosecutions were later dropped.)
	1769
February	The House of Lords passes resolves censuring the votes, resolutions, and proceedings of the Massachusetts General Court, and on February 9, the House of Commons concurs. Both Houses send messages to King George III expressing their satisfaction in the measures that he had pursued and promising the King their continued support.

May	In elections in the towns, seven of the seventeen representatives who voted to "rescind" in the previous June are defeated for reelection.
	Edes and Gill, publishers of *The Boston Gazette,* print *Letters to the Right Honourable the Earl of Hillsborough, from Governor Bernard,* etc., thus destroying Bernard's effectiveness.
	The Massachusetts Council charges Governor Bernard with "unmanly dissimulations" and earnestly requests Bernard's removal.
	The General Court meets after ten months. Governor Bernard negatives twelve of the twenty-eight Councillors elected. The House of Representatives asks Bernard to remove troops, but he asserts that he is without power in the matter.
May 8	The Boston town meeting expresses satisfaction with non-importation agreements and asks all inhabitants to follow their lead by not purchasing British-made goods.
June	General Gage decides to send some of the troops from Boston to Halifax and asks Bernard about the disposition of others. At the end of this month, Bernard agrees to keep one regiment in town and one at the Castle.
June 16	Aware that the Representatives strongly oppose the presence of troops in Boston, Bernard removes the General Court to Cambridge.
June 27	The House of Representatives asks the King to remove Bernard as Governor.
June 28	Bernard informs the House that "his Majesty had been pleased . . . , that he should report to England to lay before him the State of the Province."
July	The House of Representatives issues series of resolves against Bernard blaming him for grossly misrepresenting the situation in Boston, asking for troops, and acting "against the spirit of a free Constitution," and finally referring to Bernard as "an avowed enemy of this colony, and to the Nation in general."
July 15	Bernard, having asked for a continuance of his salary during his absence from Massachusetts and for approval of a bill for quarters for troops in Boston, is refused on both counts. He scolds the legislature bitterly and prorogues the General Court.
August 1	Sir Francis Bernard, now granted a baronetcy by the Crown, delivers the Province Seal to Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson in Council and leaves Massachusetts forever.
August 11	Boston merchants who had agreed to non-importation meet and publish the names of the merchants "who audaciously continue to counteract the united sentiments of the Body of Merchants throughout North America, by importing British goods contrary to this Agreement."
September 5	James Otis, Jr., is assaulted at the British Coffee-House in Boston by John Robinson, Customs Commissioner, and is severely beaten. Never fully recovering from the injuries, Otis gave little effective leadership to the provincial cause after this date.

Hutchinson

October 4-18	Boston town meeting members consider the Hillsborough-Bernard correspondence and prepare a 30-page defense of the town entitled, *An Appeal to the World, of a Vindication of the Town of Boston, from Many False and Malicious Aspersions Contained.*
December	In Boston a Grand Jury finds a bill of indictment against Governor Bernard, General Gage, the five Commissioners of Customs, the Collector, and the Comptroller, "for writing certain letters to the Secretary of State, and other of the King's Ministers and therein slandering the inhabitants of the Town and Province." (Writs of attachment were never issued, and the cases were not prosecuted.)

1770

January 31	Lord North becomes British Prime Minister and takes a stand for partial repeal of the Townshend Acts.
March 5	North moves for repeal of the Townshend Acts, except for the tax on tea, which is to be kept mainly as an assertion of Parliament's right to tax. Former Governor Thomas Pownall, now in Parliament, asks for total repeal. After several days of harassment and annoyance by workmen and boys in Boston, about a dozen British soldiers, being taunted and provoked by a crowd, fire into the crowd. Three men are killed outright, two more are mortally wounded, and six are injured. At the request of town leaders, Governor Hutchinson removes the troops from the town. Captain Preston and the soldiers are held for trial.
March, May, October, November	The General Court is called into session by Governor Hutchinson and meets in Cambridge. On each occasion they protest against their place of meeting and ask the Governor to call sessions in Boston, but Hutchinson, with the assured support of the British Ministry, refuses to accede to their wishes.
April 12	The Townshend Acts are repealed, except for the tax on tea. The Quartering Act is allowed to expire.
October	Captain Thomas Preston is tried, and on October 30 the jury turns in a verdict of "not guilty."
October 12	The Boston Merchants Association, which had been pledged to non-importation, is disbanded.
November	The General Court passes resolutions discouraging extravagance and the use of superfluities, encouraging industry, frugality, and the development of local industry.
November 20-December 5	The soldiers involved in the "Boston Massacre" are tried in Boston and are defended by Josiah Quincy and John Adams. Six are found not guilty; two are declared guilty of manslaughter and branded. Four civilians charged with being present and abetting are acquitted on December 11.

1771

March 14	Thomas Hutchinson receives notice of his appointment as Royal Governor with his salary to be paid by the Crown from colonial revenues, to the dismay of the patriots.

April 3 — Hutchinson convenes the General Court in Cambridge and calls for restoration and maintenance of "tranquility upon which the prosperity of the province depended." The House, in reply, insists that meetings should be held in Boston.

July 4 — Hutchinson vetoes a tax bill passed by the General Court that does not exempt crown officers from payment of taxes.

August 12 — Twelve vessels of war are anchored in Boston Harbor "in apprehension of war with Spain," but Samuel Adams and others use the incident to indicate that this is another threat to the province.

November — Hutchinson issues a proclamation of thanksgiving asking for people to profess gratitude for "civil and religious liberties." All Boston ministers, except one, refuse to read the prayer; instead, they implore "Almighty God the restoration of lost liberties."

1772

April — John Hancock is elected Speaker of the House. Although Bernard and Hutchinson had on several occasions negatived Hancock as Councillor, Hutchinson confirms the election. (At this point there was a rift between Samuel Adams and Hancock, but soon afterward a reconciliation was effected.)

May 28 — The General Court convenes in Cambridge and asks the Governor to convene that body in Boston, but the request is denied at first. Finally, on June 15, Hutchinson decides to adjourn the General Court to Boston.

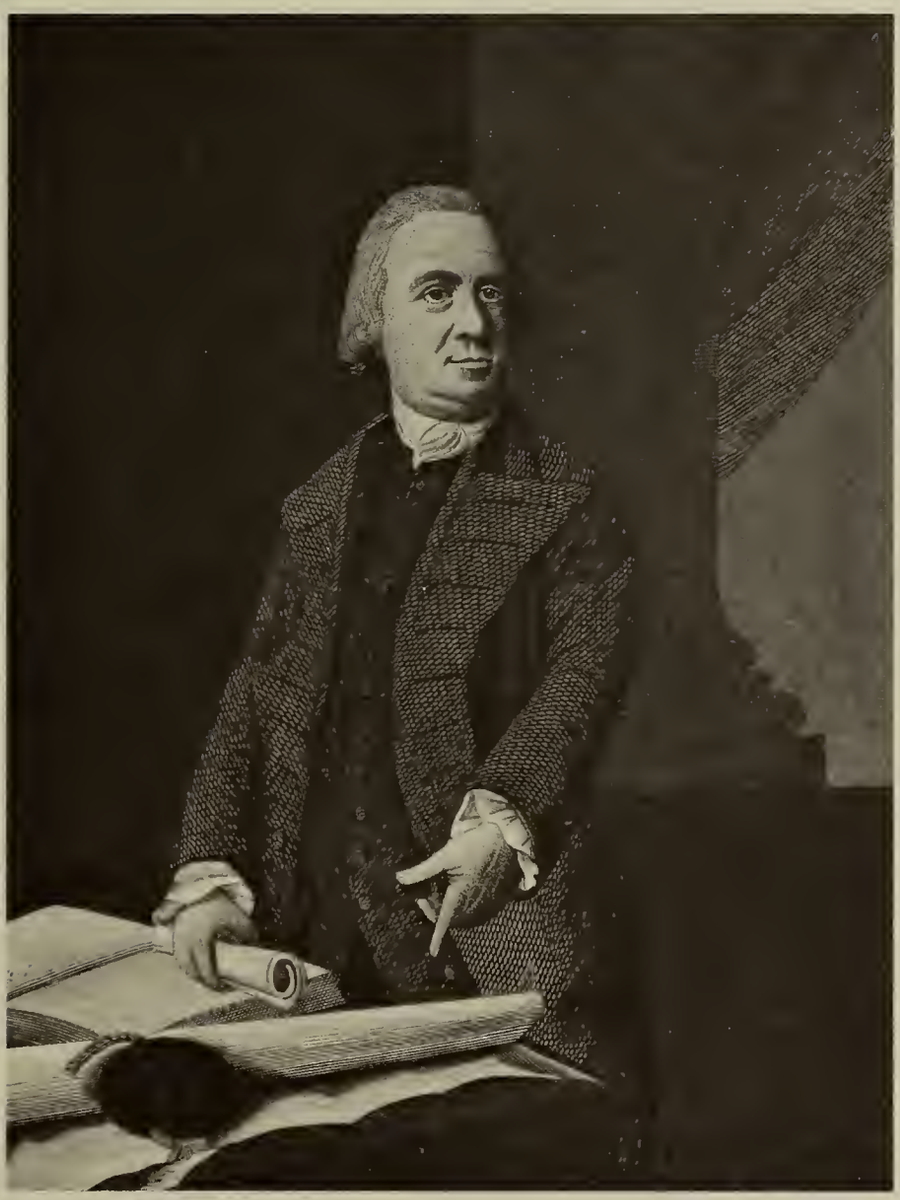
June 13 — The Governor informs the House that he has received and accepted his salary from the King.

July 10 — The House of Representatives by vote of 85 to 19, passes a resolve that "the making provision for the support of the governor to the province, independent of the acts and grants of the General Assembly, is an infraction upon the rights granted to the inhabitants by the royal charter, and in derogation of the Constitution."

August 7 — Lord Hillsborough informs Hutchinson that the king, "with the concurrence of Lord North, has made provision for the support of his law servants in the Massachusetts Bay."

October 28 — The Boston town meeting draws up numerous petitions protesting the paying of salaries to the Governor, Secretary, and judges, none of which the Governor will accept. The meeting also asks Governor Hutchinson to call the General Court into session so that the matter might be considered, but Hutchinson refuses.

November 2 — Samuel Adams induces the Boston town meeting to choose a committee "to state the rights of the colonists and of the province in particular, as Men, as Christians, and as Subjects; to communicate and publish the same to the several towns in this Province and to the World, as the sense of this town, with the infringements and violations thereof that have been or from time to time may be made; also requesting of each town a free communication of their sentiments on the subject." James Otis is made chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, and Samuel Adams and Dr. Joseph Warren become active participants.



Samuel Adams

Engraved for Drake's History of Boston

November 20 — The Committee of Correspondence makes a report which affirms colonial rights, points out some infringements and violations by the Parliament which assumed the power of legislating for the colonies in all cases. The report is accepted by the town meeting, is endorsed and distributed to the towns. The towns begin organizing committees of correspondence and a widespread exchange of ideas results. (In the next two years other colonies took up the idea and intercolonial correspondence developed.)

1773

January 6 — Hutchinson convenes the General Court and in his message comments severely on the attempt of the Boston leaders to "call in question the authority of Great Britain to make and establish laws" for the colonies. Noting that committees of correspondence have been formed, he concludes "I know of no line that can be drawn between the supreme authority of Parliament and the total independence of the colonies."

February 12 — Hutchinson refuses his assent to a bill paying the salaries of the judges of the Superior Court, stating that he expects warrants for their salaries from the King. The House protests that in accepting salaries from the crown the judges would be under an "undue bias" and adds that "we cannot wonder that the apprehensions of this people are thoroughly awakened."

March 5 — Dr. Benjamin Church, Jr., in his address commemorating the third anniversary of the Boston Massacre, predicts that "some future Congress would be the glorious source of the salvation of America."

April-May — Parliament, in order to assist the East India Company in disposing of 17,000,000 pounds of tea, passes an act to remit all British duties on tea exported to America, retaining the import tax of a 3d a pound. By allowing the company to sell tea directly to America, the agents were thus able to undersell merchants who bought tea through middlemen or smugglers who bought tea in Holland.

June — Appearing before a secret session of the House of Representatives, Samuel Adams reads letters sent by Thomas Hutchinson (as Chief Justice) and Andrew Oliver (Secretary) to Thomas Whately in London. These letters, which had given "a very unfavorable representation of the state of affairs, of the temper of the people, and of the views of their leaders in Massachusetts," are published in Boston later in the year, and in December the House of Representatives asks for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver.

November 1, 2 — Some Bostonians try to force the resignation of Boston consignees of East India tea, including two of Hutchinson's sons.

November 5 — A meeting of citizens is held in Faneuil Hall and passes several resolves including one to prevent the sale of tea. In the afternoon a committee calls upon tea agents and tries unsuccessfully to force resignations. In the next six weeks town meetings held in nearby towns support Boston's resolves.

November 28 — The first of ten ships arrives in Boston with 114 chests of tea.

November 30 — The tea consignees state that they cannot return tea but would be willing to store it until otherwise ordered.

November 28-December 16 — Three tea ships are in Boston. The ships' captains are willing to return with cargo to England; the consignees are to discharge them; custom house will not give clearance; Governor refuses to give pass to clear fort.

December 16 — Unwilling to allow the tea to be landed and unable to obtain official clearance for ships to leave, a number of men disguised as Indians board ships at Griffin's Wharf in Boston and empty 342 chests of tea in the harbor.

1774

March 7 — King George III sends a message to Parliament informing that body of the destruction of tea in Boston harbor. A bill to close the port of Boston until the tea is paid for is debated in March, passes Parliament, and on May 31 this first coercive act receives royal approval.

May — News is received in Boston early in May that the port of Boston will be closed on June 1.

A pamphlet by Josiah Quincy, Boston lawyer, entitled *Observations on the Act of Parliament Commonly Called the Port Bill, with Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies,* is published in Boston.

May 13 — General Thomas Gage, Commander-in-Chief of the British armies in America, arrives in Boston to take over the Governorship and to command troops there.

May 14 — The Boston town meeting resolves "That it is the opinion of this town, that if the other colonies come into a joint resolution to stop all importation from and exportation to Great Britain, and every part of the West Indies, till the act be repealed, the same will prove the salvation of North America and her liberties; and that the impolicy, injustice, inhumanity, and cruelty of the act exceed our powers of expression: We therefore leave it to the just censure of others, and appeal to God and the world."

The resolves were to be distributed throughout the colonies.

May 20 — King George gives royal assent to Massachusetts Government Act, which nullifies Massachusetts charter, and to the Administration of Justice Act.

May — Elections are held in Massachusetts towns and in the General Court. Gage negatives thirteen of the Councillors elected by the House of Representatives.

June 7 — On Gage's orders, the General Court is removed to Salem.

June 17 — The General Court elects delegates to a Continental Congress to be held in Philadelphia on September 1. Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, James Bowdoin, John Adams and Robert Treat Paine are chosen.

September 1 — Gage sends two companies of soldiers to seize the powder in an arsenal in Charlestown.

September 6 — Representatives from several towns in Suffolk County meet at Dedham. They move to Milton on September 9 and then resolve their opposition to the recent acts of Parliament declaring, "that no obedience is due from the province to either, or any part of the said acts, but that they should be rejected as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America." Copies of the resolves are sent to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and are adopted by that body on September 17.

October 5 — The General Court is scheduled to meet in Salem on this date, but Gage cancels the session. The members gather together, anyway, and form a Provincial Congress. They soon remove to Concord, where they elect John Hancock president, petition the governor to desist in the building of a fort at the entrance of Boston harbor "to restore that pass to its neutral state." They meet at least twice more that year, make plans for the defense of the Colony, ask the ministers of the province "to assist us in avoiding that dreadful slavery," and begin to correspond with the Canadian government.

The Provincial Congress also elects a treasurer and names as an executive body, the Committee of Safety, an eleven member body with John Hancock as president. This Committee is empowered to mobilize the militia and to seize needed stores.

October 21 — Citizens of Taunton raise a flag containing the legend "Union and Liberty" on Taunton Green.

December — In this month Daniel Leonard of Taunton begins a series of letters *To the Inhabitants of the Province of Massachusetts* over the pen name *Massachusettensis.* In the next month John Adams replies to them over the signature *Novanglus* in *The Boston Gazette.*

1775

January 20 — The Earl of Chatham, William Pitt, presents a motion in the House of Lords, to request the King to remove troops from Boston immediately. His motion is overwhelmingly defeated.

January 23 — Gage sends a detachment to Marshfield to protect Loyalists in the Old Colony area. Selectmen of several towns protest to the Governor.

February 1 — The Second Provincial Congress meets in Cambridge and begins formulating plans to prepare province for war by urging the militia, and especially "Minute Men," "to perfect themselves in military discipline," to procure and make free arms and bayonets, and to obtain provisions and supplies. Local militia societies, called "Minute Men," are armed and drill in the various towns.

February 9 — Parliament declares Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion.

February 26 — Having learned of the location of military stores in Salem, Gage sends a small force to seize them. The soldiers find no stores there and go on to Danvers. Their mission unsuccessful, the troops return to Boston.

February 27 — A bill is introduced in Parliament forbidding New England colonies to trade with any nation except Britain and British West Indies after July 1. The bill also bars the New England colonies from fishing in North Atlantic after July 20. The act is passed and on March 30 receives royal assent.

March — Provincial leaders decide to station guard for security of arms stored in Concord and to station couriers in Charlestown, Cambridge, and Roxbury to alarm the country if an attempt is made to seize the stores.

April 14 — Gage receives a letter from Hillsborough dated January 27, ordering him use of force if necessary to enforce the Coercive Acts passed in 1774.

April 18 — Gage orders Lt. Col. Francis Smith to lead a force of 700 men to destroy supplies at Concord.

Paul Revere, William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott set out to warn the countryside. Revere and Dawes, using separate routes, warn Minute Men from Boston to Lexington. Prescott carries the warning to Concord.

April 19 — British forces and Massachusetts Minute Men clash on Lexington Green. Eight Americans are killed and ten are wounded. British proceed to Concord and destroy some stores. There they engage in a skirmish with patriots from surrounding communities. On their return to Charlestown the British suffer heavy casualties in guerrilla fighting.

The siege of Boston by American troops begins.

The Committee of Safety forwards news of Lexington to other colonies.

April 23 — The Provincial Congress assembles, authorizes the raising of 13,000 men, makes Artemas Ward Commander-in-Chief, and appeals to other colonies for aid. Congress sends an account of the Lexington fight to Great Britain with depositions to prove that the British were the aggressors. The Congress addresses a letter to the King, professing loyalty but indicating determination "not tamely to submit to the persecution and tyranny of his evil ministry."

May 5 — The Provincial Congress resolves that General Gage "ought to be considered and guarded against, as an unnatural and inveterate enemy of the country."

May 24 — John Hancock is elected President of the Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia.

May 25 — British generals William Howe, John Burgoyne, and Henry Clinton arrive in Boston.

May 30 — The patriot version of the Lexington-Concord fight arrives in London some ten days or so ahead of the version sent by the British.

June 9 — The Second Continental Congress, in response to a request for advice on procedure by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, advises that body to form a temporary government.

June 10 — John Adams at the Second Continental Congress proposes that Congress should accept the American troops near Boston as a Continental army and should appoint a general, hinting that George Washington of Virgina should be named.

June 12 — Governor Gage issues a proclamation in Boston declaring martial law in the province and in the King's name offering pardon to all persons "who shall forthwith lay down their arms, and return to the duties of peacable subjects, excepting only from the benefits of such pardon, Samuel Adams and John Hancock, whose offences are of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration, than that of condign punishment."

John Hancock

June 17 — British troops attack American forces on Breed's Hill in Charlestown and rout Americans there and on nearby Bunker Hill. The British sustain heavy losses and fail to follow up their advantage, thus allowing Americans to regroup in Cambridge. American losses include General Joseph Warren, the distinguished physician and patriot, and British losses include Major John Pitcairn, who had been second in command at Lexington.

July 3 — George Washington arrives in Cambridge to take charge of the Continental Army.

July 20 — James Warren, president of the Provincial Congress, acting upon the advice of the Continental Congress (June 9) asks the towns to elect representatives to the General Court to meet at Watertown on this date. The Representatives meet, elect Warren to be Speaker of the House and then elect a Council. These two bodies then proceed to legislate for the province.

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LIBERTY TREE
1765
1775
BOSTON. MASSACHUSETTS